

What is his crime? Mr. Choudhury spoke up for interfaith dialogue, he published articles critical of Islamic extremism, and he appealed for greater religious tolerance and freedom. For these "crimes" he is charged with sedition, an offense punishable by death.

Mr. Choudhury has already been harassed and subjected to harsh interrogation techniques in prison. His newspaper offices were bombed by Islamic extremists in July of 2006, and he was physically attacked in October of 2006.

This resolution calls on the Government of Bangladesh to immediately drop the charges against Mr. Choudhury, to return his confiscated property, to stop intimidation tactics against him, and to protect him from future harassment.

Mr. Choudhury advocates peace and tolerance. It is time that Congress sends a strong and clear message: we are watching, and we will not allow Mr. Choudhury and others like him to be silenced.

I hope you will join me in strongly supporting H. Res. 64.

Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. CHABOT).

Mr. CHABOT. I thank the gentleman for yielding; and, Mr. Speaker, I want to especially thank the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. KIRK) and Mrs. NITA LOWEY for their hard work in bringing this thoughtful resolution to the House floor today.

I was in Bangladesh about 3 weeks ago where I had the opportunity to meet with the new caretaker government, that leadership, as well as the leaderships in the two main political parties that are vying for power and have held power the last several decades. In fact, I met with our ambassador and members in the business community.

But one of the highlights and I think the most significant thing that I had an opportunity to do was to meet with the gentleman, Shoaib Choudhury, who is a journalist, and we have heard much talk about his situation this morning. But I think the gravity of it is significant, and I think it is important that this House is taking this action today.

Mr. Choudhury is a journalist in Bangladesh, known for his viewpoints which are favorable to expanding dialogue between Muslims and Jews and Christians and for developing ties with Israel. As was indicated, he was actually arrested on his way to Israel at the airport, and he is also trying to have more equality relative to religion and especially his observance and opposition to Islamic extremism, which unfortunately is on the rise in Bangladesh and in a number of regions.

Just as Islamic extremism and fundamentalism have been a danger in other areas of the world, it is a real problem in Bangladesh, and he has had the courage to speak out on this important issue.

Unfortunately, in a place where journalists are not necessarily given broad

freedom of speech as our media would have here in this country, Mr. Choudhury was arrested and charged with sedition and accused of espionage and unjustly incarcerated for 17 months during which he received less than adequate treatment for glaucoma and other conditions from which he suffers. He is now facing charges which could bring the death penalty under Bangladesh law.

Now, several government leaders indicated that they do not intend to pursue the death penalty in this particular case; but when one considers the actions for which Mr. Choudhury was charged, this is not a person that should be jailed in the first place. This is a person who should be honored, as he has been around the world. You have to admire his strength and his resilience.

I asked him how he was being treated and spoke with him about the prospects for his trial. His next trial appearance was supposed to be February 28. At the time of my visit, Mr. Choudhury was encouraged by recent government assurances that his charges might be dropped or that they did not intend to go forward with the death penalty; but as it turns out, a radical Islamist-affiliated judge recently signed an order forcing the trial and the court proceedings to proceed. He is being accused of a threat to the security of Bangladesh. So much for a fair trial and just treatment.

This is something that really should get the attention not only of this House but the world.

This bipartisan resolution on the floor today urges the Bangladeshi Government to drop all charges against Mr. Choudhury. The United States Congress should show Mr. Choudhury that he can count on our full support and that the success of fledgling democracies such as Bangladesh lies squarely on the very freedoms that Mr. Choudhury embodies.

I am glad to be a cosponsor of this important resolution. I thank the Speaker for recognizing this and urge my colleagues to support it.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of our time.

Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. Speaker, again in closing, I want to thank the chairman of the Middle East Subcommittee, Mr. ACKERMAN, for bringing this forward. Certainly we want to thank Mr. KIRK for his hard work and then Mrs. LOWEY for making this a very bipartisan effort, and I would urge all of my colleagues to support this.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

□ 1300

Mr. ACKERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I want to express my gratitude to Mr. BOOZMAN, the gentleman from Arkansas, for his expeditious handling of this on the floor. I want to thank both Mr. KIRK and Mrs. LOWEY for bringing this resolution to our attention and to also note the great spirit of nonpartisanship

that we have on this matter and hope that that could splash over and spill over and overwhelm some prevailing attitudes on both sides so that we might bring this kind of approach and dedication to all of the legislation that we have before us this session.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New York (Mr. ACKERMAN) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 64, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the yeas have it.

Mr. KIRK. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

RECOGNIZING THE 186TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE INDEPENDENCE OF GREECE AND CELEBRATING GREEK AND AMERICAN DEMOCRACY

Mr. WEXLER. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 228) recognizing the 186th anniversary of the independence of Greece and celebrating Greek and American democracy.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. RES. 228

Whereas the ancient Greeks developed the concept of democracy, in which the supreme power to govern was vested in the people;

Whereas the Founding Fathers of the United States drew heavily on the political experience and philosophy of ancient Greece in forming our representative democracy;

Whereas Greek Commander in Chief Petros Mavromichalis, a founder of the modern Greek state, said to the citizens of the United States in 1821 that "it is in your land that liberty has fixed her abode and . . . in imitating you, we shall imitate our ancestors and be thought worthy of them if we succeed in resembling you";

Whereas Greece played a major role in the World War II struggle to protect freedom and democracy through such bravery as was shown in the historic Battle of Crete, which provided the Axis land war with its first major setback, setting off a chain of events that significantly affected the outcome of World War II;

Whereas the price for Greece in holding our common values in their region was high, as hundreds of thousands of civilians were killed in Greece during World War II;

Whereas throughout the 20th century, Greece was one of only three countries in the world, other than the former British Empire, that allied with the United States in every major international conflict;

Whereas President George W. Bush, in recognizing Greek Independence Day, said, "Greece and America have been firm allies in the great struggles for liberty. Americans will always remember Greek heroism and Greek sacrifice for the sake of freedom . . . [and] as the 21st Century dawns, Greece and America once again stand united; this time

in the fight against terrorism. The United States deeply appreciates the role Greece is playing in the war against terror. . . . America and Greece are strong allies, and we're strategic partners.”;

Whereas President Bush stated that Greece's successful “law enforcement operations against a terrorist organization [November 17] responsible for three decades of terrorist attacks underscore the important contributions Greece is making to the global war on terrorism”;

Whereas Greece is a strategic partner and ally of the United States in bringing political stability and economic development to the volatile Balkan region, having invested over \$10 billion in the region;

Whereas Greece was extraordinarily responsive to requests by the United States during the war in Iraq, as Greece immediately granted unlimited access to its airspace and the base in Souda Bay, and many ships of the United States that delivered troops, cargo, and supplies to Iraq were refueled in Greece;

Whereas in August 2004, the Olympic games came home to Athens, Greece, the land of their ancient birthplace 2,500 years ago and the city of their modern revival in 1896;

Whereas Greece received world-wide praise for its extraordinary handling during the 2004 Olympics of over 14,000 athletes from 202 countries and over 2 million spectators and journalists, which it did so efficiently, securely, and with its famous Greek hospitality;

Whereas the unprecedented security effort in Greece for the first summer Olympics after the attacks on the United States on September 11, 2001, included a record-setting expenditure of over \$1,390,000,000 and assignment of over 70,000 security personnel, as well as the utilization of an eight-country Olympic Security Advisory Group that included the United States;

Whereas Greece, located in a region where Christianity meets Islam and Judaism, maintains excellent relations with Muslim nations and Israel;

Whereas the Government of Greece has had extraordinary success in recent years in furthering cross-cultural understanding and reducing tensions between Greece and Turkey;

Whereas Greece and the United States are at the forefront of the effort for freedom, democracy, peace, stability, and human rights;

Whereas those and other ideals have forged a close bond between Greece and the United States and their peoples;

Whereas March 25, 2007, the National Day of Celebration of Greek and American Democracy, marks the 186th anniversary of the beginning of the revolution that freed the Greek people from the Ottoman Empire and celebrates the aspirations for democracy that the peoples of Greece and the United States share; and

Whereas it is proper and desirable for the United States to celebrate this anniversary with the Greek people and to reaffirm the democratic principles from which these two great nations were born: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) extends warm congratulations and best wishes to the people of Greece as they celebrate the 186th anniversary of the independence of Greece;

(2) expresses support for the principles of democratic governance to which the people of Greece are committed; and

(3) notes the important role that Greece has played in the wider European region and in the community of nations since gaining its independence 186 years ago.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. WEXLER) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida.

Mr. WEXLER. Mr. Speaker, it is an honor for me to pay tribute on Greek Independence Day to one of America's most important European allies, Greece, and one that holds immeasurable importance to millions of Americans.

I would also like to thank my good friend from Florida (Ms. ROSELEHTINEN), who has been a leading supporter of U.S.-Greek relations in Congress.

Western civilization as we know it today is undeniably connected to Greece. For every American, Greece is known as the cradle of democracy. As a nation that still seeks to perfect its democracy in civic society, America looks to Greece and its universally known philosophers and leaders for political inspiration and wisdom. In fact, the very word “democracy” is a Greek word. The history of Greek independence is inspiring, especially given America's own history and drive for independence from tyranny and oppression. Greeks have been willing to fight for independence, sacrifice for the sake of freedom, and have stirred others to do the same.

As a Member of Congress with a large Greek-American community, I am especially pleased that we are passing this resolution today, which also highlights the extraordinary contributions of a community that has contributed greatly to the shared prosperity of our Nation. Today, the Greek-American community remains the bedrock in the unbreakable bond between the United States and our ally, Greece. As ambassadors of goodwill between the United States and Greece, Greek Americans have for decades shaped this long-standing friendship, creating a partnership based on freedom, democracy and peace.

Today, some 5 million Americans claim Greek ancestry, with understandable pride. Greece is one of less than a handful of nations that have stood shoulder-to-shoulder with the United States in every major war of the 20th century. Our close relations became even closer after World War II. The Truman Doctrine helped save Greece from communism, indeed helped save it for the Western world, and the Marshall Plan helped pave the way for economic success.

In 1952, Greece joined NATO, formalizing the deep mutual commitment of Greece and the rest of the western world to protecting freedom. Now, as an integral member of the EU for two decades, Greece has become increasingly prosperous, a democratic role model for the nations of the world.

Greece remains a critical strategic partner in today's post-Cold War world. We cooperate closely in promoting

peace and stability in the Balkans. Athens has supported efforts to settle the Cyprus problem and to end the divide on the island. And I am especially supportive of Greece's critical efforts in recent years to resolve historic differences with its neighbor, Turkey, including supporting that country's membership in the EU.

Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the Greek people on the 186th anniversary of their independence and strongly support this resolution.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I want to encourage all of my colleagues to support H. Res. 228, recognizing the 186th anniversary of the independence of Greece, celebrating Greek and American democracy and recognizing Greece as a very staunch ally and friend of our United States.

Greece was the birthplace of the principles of democracy on which our Nation was founded. Our Founders studied Greek culture and Greek politics, and their influence is still with us today. Over the centuries, Greece has demonstrated its commitment to what it and our Nation prize among our highest ideals, and that word is “liberty,” “eleftheria” to the Greek people.

Indeed, many of our Nation's respective ideas are shared and, therefore, our relationship holds a special significance. Both the United States and Greece share much in common. Both are outward-looking trading nations that have enriched the world through commercial and cultural exchanges.

Over the decades the U.S.-Greek relationship has developed quite dynamically, bolstered by common ideas and cooperation. Moreover, the Greek people have strived to protect freedom and democracy, allying itself with the United States in every major conflict of the 20th century, notably sacrificing for and contributing to the victory of the Allied forces over the Axis powers during World War II.

Today, our common destinies are threatened by other enemies who scorn our commitment to freedom, eleftheria, and aggression from Islamic extremism looms large and threatens western civilization that was born in that country of Greece. We are grateful that the Greek people have stood against this aggression throughout the years.

Indeed, Greece should be praised for its contributions in the global war on terror. In the war in Iraq, Greece has been responsive to U.S. requests for access to its air space and in fueling U.S. ships that supply cargo ships headed to Iraq.

Mr. Speaker, I look forward to further cooperation between our two nations and expanding the friendship that exists between Greek and American people. I therefore ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating the nation of Greece on the 186th anniversary of its independence and to express their

acknowledgment of the great friendship that exists between our two countries.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WEXLER. Mr. Speaker, I would like to give Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas, a member of the Foreign Affairs Committee, 5½ minutes.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. I thank the distinguished chairman and I thank my colleagues, my fellow member of the Foreign Affairs Committee, the chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee, Mr. LANTOS, and the ranking member, Ms. ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN. Certainly, I have indicated already to Chairman WEXLER thanks for his continued leadership.

Mr. Speaker, I rise, of course, to acknowledge and certainly support recognizing the 186th anniversary of the independence of Greece and celebrating Greek and American democracy. Greece has been a long-term model, if you will, for the principles of democracy. Any of us who have had the honor of learning the Greek philosophers throughout our academic training know that the principles they have enunciated have been strong and lasting.

With that in mind as I celebrate the 186th anniversary, I commend my friends in Greece for their continued deliberations dealing with the issue of divide between the Turks and Greece, and I look forward to an opportunity that resolutions will come about that would solve some of those problems.

Might I, Mr. WEXLER, also indicate my support for H. Res. 64, which speaks to the freedom of press and particularly expresses the sense of the House of Representatives that the government of Bangladesh should immediately drop all charges against Bangladeshi journalist Salah Uddin Shoaib Choudhury. I say that in recognition of the principles of freedom of press. Whenever we have had the opportunity to interact in bilaterals through Members of Congress or parliamentarians, one of the key issues that are discussed is the right of the voice of the opposition, or the voice of difference to be expressed. I hope that this particular legislation will pass with a firm statement by this Congress that we are, if you will, asking for his release.

Might I also support H. Res. 107. I am an original cosponsor of this legislation calling for the immediate and unconditional release of the Israeli soldiers held captive by Hamas and Hezbollah. Let me say this, I have met with one of the family members of one of the captive soldiers.

I think what is important in this statement, because we know that King Abdullah just a few days ago came to this Congress and said, we can make a difference in the Palestinian-Israeli issue. This happens to be soldiers that are in Lebanon, and, frankly, I think the point should be made that Israel has, in fact, done what they said they would do in pulling back.

Whenever you get agreements that are kept, promises that are kept, then it seems that in the course of international collegiality or international decorum or international protocol that you have the opportunity to receive your soldiers back home, your loved ones back home. These young men, who are still being held, Gilad Shalit, Eldad Regev and Ehud Goldwasser, remain in captivity, even though the United Nations has, through passing United Nations Security Council Resolution 1701, imposed a ceasefire on the Lebanon-Israel border. The resolution called for, and I quote, the unconditional release of the abducted Israeli soldiers. Even in the United Nations, which has a place for disparate voices and has a place for disagreement, we find that there is a call for their release.

So I would hope that this particular legislation is not taken as a negative, but it is taken in compliance with the United Nations' interests in countries, recognizing when agreements are made that we can move forward on the agreement, and the captivity of soldiers of another sovereign nation certainly argues against having a world forum that really works.

The United Nations has managed with all its difficulties to be a world forum. It has made a statement that they should be released. I would hope there would be enough resolve in Hezbollah and certainly in Hamas and others and in Lebanon, that whatever your viewpoint, you certainly should have the view to provide comfort to these families and have their loved ones returned.

So I ask again for support of the underlying bill; that is, H. Res. 228, and I add my support for H. Res. 64; and as a cosponsor of H. Res. 107, I add my support for that.

I conclude by simply saying that we have an opportunity to accept the challenge of King Abdullah in the way that we must know how to do it, and that is engagement and resolve for the best of all people in the Mideast. I hope that we will do so, and I would say to my friends in Lebanon, a good step and a good start would be the release, unconditional release of these soldiers.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H. Res. 107, which calls for the immediate and unconditional release of Israeli soldiers held captive by Hamas and Hezbollah and expresses the Congress's support for a two-state resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Mr. Speaker, while the fighting between Israel and Hamas and Hezbollah has subsided, one of the initial causes for the war, has not yet been addressed. Three young men, Gilad Shalit, Eldad Regev, and Ehud Goldwasser, remain in captivity.

The fighting last summer ended when the United Nations Security Council passed Resolution 1701, which imposed a ceasefire on the Israel-Lebanon border. That resolution unequivocally called for "the unconditional release of the abducted Israeli soldiers."

Therefore, their ongoing captivity is ignoring the will of the international community. Indeed,

Hamas and Hezbollah have not even allowed access to the Israeli captives by competent medical personnel and representatives of the International Committee of the Red Cross.

Mr. Speaker, H. Res. 107 expresses this Congress's vision for "a resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict through the creation of a viable and independent Palestinian state living in peace alongside of the State of Israel." But this vision cannot be achieved by continuing to hold these soldiers by Hamas and Hezbollah.

The United States cannot turn a blind eye when citizens of a fellow democracy fall prey to terrorists acts. Israeli soldiers must be released without delay and without preconditions, as the Security Council demands. That is also our demand. We will remain committed to the soldiers' freedom—for the sake of peace and to move toward a just resolution to these conflicts in the Mid East.

Mr. Speaker, I support the resolution sponsored by Mr. ACKERMAN, the chairman of the Middle East and South Asia Subcommittee. I urge all my colleagues to do so as well.

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. BILIRAKIS).

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my deep pride and respect to the Hellenic Republic as it prepares to celebrate the anniversary of Greek Independence Day, which took place on March 25, 1821.

I am almost certain that Thomas Jefferson cast an eye across the Atlantic towards Greece when he uttered these words in 1821, "The flames kindled on the 4th of July, 1776, have not spread over much of the globe to be extinguished by the feeble engines of despotism . . . On the contrary, they will consume these engines and all who work them."

It is God's handiwork that I am blessed to straddle two cultures that have been beacons of liberty for all of civilization. The place of my birth, the land of the free and the home of the brave, the United States of America, and the land of my ancestors, the birthplace of democracy, the Hellenic Republic, Greece. I honor those brave and resilient Greeks who refused to be assimilated or converted into the Ottoman Empire. They endured centuries of torture and persecution to hang on to their precious heritage and faith. Bishop Germanos of Patras raised the emblem of freedom for Hellenes, the flag bearing a white cross and nine blue and white stripes representing the nine letters, *eleftheria*, freedom.

This was an act of defiance against the Ottoman Empire, marking the beginning of Greece's war of independence on March 25, 1821.

□ 1315

Cries of Zito I Ellas, long live Greece; *Eleftheria* I Thanatos, live free or die, could be heard from the Ionian to the Aegean, from the Peloponnese to the Dodocanese where my grandparents are from.

It took 8 hard-fought years, until 1829, for the Sultan Mahmud to capitulate and surrender. Greek independence

was guaranteed with the Treaty of Adrianople.

Greeks were the first Ottoman subjects to secure recognition as an independent and sovereign nation. It was a fierce fight that drew support from Philhellenes the world over. None other than the United States, England, Lord Byron was wonderful in this cause.

Undoubtedly, these Philhellenes were indebted to Greece, the world's first advanced civilization, for providing a cultural heritage that has influenced the world with firsts in philosophy, politics, mathematics, science, art and sport with the Olympics, just to name a few.

I honor my ancestors for their deep abiding conviction in all that is good and true about mankind. I celebrate their bravery and commitment to freedom and justice. I praise their perseverance and patience in the face of unspeakable hardships. I commend their sacrifices to posterity so that, should there ever be another who seeks to oppress freedom-loving people, we will be able to look upon history and summon up the same courage that those unyielding Hellenes exhibited nearly two centuries ago.

Just as our great Founding Fathers studied the model of democracy the ancient Greeks put forth, it is likely our revolution for independence in the late 18th century served as a blueprint for the early 19th-century Greeks to try their hand at freedom and sovereignty. It is a beautiful, symbolic symbiotic relationship that the United States and Greece have shared since, and it continues to enjoy.

As George Washington proclaimed at the onset of the American Revolution: "Our cause is noble. It is the cause of mankind." So it was in 1776 America and in 1821 Greece, and so it will always remain.

Zito I Ellas, and God bless America.

Mr. WEXLER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentlelady from New York (Mrs. MALONEY), who also is the cochair of the Hellenic Caucus.

Mrs. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, as an original cosponsor of this legislation, H. Res. 228, and co-chair and cofounder of the Congressional Caucus on Hellenic Issues, I rise today to celebrate the 186th anniversary of Greece's independence from the Ottoman Empire.

Against incredibly difficult odds, the Greeks defeated one of the most powerful empires in history to gain their independence.

Following 400 years of Ottoman rule, in March 1821, Bishop Germanos of Patras raised the traditional Greek flag at the monastery of Agia Lavras, inciting his countrymen to rise up against the Ottoman Empire.

The bishop timed this act of revolution to coincide with the Greek Orthodox holiday celebrating the archangel Gabriel's announcement that the Virgin Mary was pregnant with the divine child.

Bishop Germanos' message to his people was clear, a new spirit was about to be born in Greece. The following year, the Treaty of Constantinople established full independence of Greece.

As we celebrate Greek Independence Day, we should reflect upon the strong ties between Greece and the United States and the strong commitment to democracy shared by our two countries.

The Greeks of 1821 fought for independence from the Ottoman Empire while drawing inspiration from the ideals and institutions of the United States.

During their war of independence, the Greeks also received support from many Americans, including Presidents James Madison and James Monroe and Representatives Daniel Webster and Henry Clay, each of whom gave speeches and made resolutions and other statements in Congress in support of the Greek revolutionaries.

Just as our defeat of the British Army was remarkable, so too was the Greek triumph over the Ottoman Army, a momentous achievement in world history.

New York City is home to the largest Hellenic population outside of Greece and Cyprus. Western Queens, which I have the honor of representing, is often called Little Athens because of the large Hellenic population in its neighborhoods.

New Yorkers celebrate Greek Independence Day with a parade on Fifth Avenue, along with many cultural events, private meetings and celebrations. These events, hosted by the Federation of Hellenic Societies and other Hellenic and Philhellenic organizations and friends, remind us of the Hellenic American community's many, many contributions to our Nation's history and culture.

Relations between the United States and Greece remain strong with a shared commitment to ensuring stability in southeastern Europe.

I hope permanent solutions can be found for ending the division of Cyprus and finding a mutually agreed upon name for the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

Additionally, I strongly support the inclusion of Greece in the Visa Waiver Program. Last month, along with Representatives SPACE and BILIRAKIS and 18 of our House colleagues, we sent letters to Secretary Rice and Secretary Chertoff urging them to extend the Visa Waiver Program to Greece. Greece is the only member of the original 15 European Union nations not to belong to the Visa Waiver Program.

Greece has met the criteria for the program, including a less than 3 percent refusal rate of U.S. nonimmigrant visa applicants and biometric passports. I hope that they will soon be included in the program, and I ask my colleagues and the Nation to join me in celebrating Greek's independence today.

Additionally, it is my sincere pleasure to pay tribute to the New York Hellenic American community for its many, many contributions to our city and Nation.

Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, as a member of the Congressional Caucus on Hellenic Affairs, I am proud to congratulate the nation of Greece on the 186th anniversary of independence. Though it began the cradle of Democracy and formed the foundation of Western thought, Greece was ruled over by various empires until 1821 when the people of Greece threw off Ottoman oppression and set about founding a government that would be ruled by Greeks and for Greeks.

The ancient Greek city-states provided young American with a strong foundation of government and philosophy to build our democracies. In both our nations, the Golden Age of Greece continues to be a guiding light.

During the last 50 years, the United States has been proud to stand with the Greek people as they confronted communist oppression, solidified their democracy, and became part of the vibrant European economy.

Independence, once achieved, is not guaranteed for all time. We know that at all times there must be those who are willing to sacrifice to retain liberty. Both of our nations have faced struggles for survival since the initial moment of independence. We must continue to support each other in the causes of freedom and democracy.

Again, I congratulate the Greek people on this historic day. It is a day to remember the sacrifices of the past, to take pride in your nation, and to look forward to a bright future.

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Chairman WEXLER, chairman of the Subcommittee on Europe, and also Ranking Member ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN, for their work on this legislation.

We have no further speakers, so I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. WEXLER. Mr. Speaker, I too want to thank Mr. POE. And we also do not have any more speakers, so we will yield back.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Florida (Mr. WEXLER) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 228.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. WEXLER. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

RECOGNIZING THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE TREATY OF ROME

Mr. WEXLER. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 230) recognizing the 50th Anniversary of the Treaty of Rome signed on March 25, 1957, which was a key step in creating the European Union, and reaffirming the close